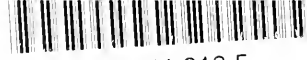


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MR. WEBSTER'S REMARKS
AT THE
NEW HAMPSHIRE FESTIVAL,

BOSTON, NOV. 7TH, 1849.

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CORRECTION — page 3, last line, for *dextra* read *dextram*.

S P E E C H E S

OF THE

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER,

OF MASSACHUSETTS,

DELIVERED AT THE

Festival of the Sons of New Hampshire,

IN BOSTON, NOV. 7TH, 1849.

PHONOGRAPHIC REPORT BY DR. JAMES W. STONE,

PRESIDENT OF THE BOSTON PHONOGRAPHIC REPORTING ASSOCIATION.

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MR. WEBSTER'S REMARKS
AT THE
NEW HAMPSHIRE FESTIVAL,

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RESIDENTS of Boston and its vicinity, native born of New Hampshire! we meet here to-day in honor of our native State, to commemorate and record our grateful affection for her; to acknowledge the obligation that we all feel under for her care and nurture in our early days. Coming into this, another State, we have not brought with us all our affections, or all our attachments.

We have invited to meet us many distinguished citizens of New Hampshire. They have answered our invitation, and have come in numbers. It may be considered properly the duty of the place I occupy to bid them, one and all, welcome. [Applause.] Welcome, ye of New Hampshire origin, from every part and quarter of our native State! If you come from the pleasant valleys of the Connecticut and Merrimac, welcome! Are you from the sea-shore and the lakes of Strafford? welcome! Come ye from the Monadnock and the sides of the Crystal Hills? welcome! *welcome!* WELCOME! [Cheers.]

It was not in my power, Gentlemen, to meet you in the Hall of the State House before dinner. But I meet you here, and in the name of us who have prepared this celebration, I greet our guests, and in my own name, I greet all. I think they say the Chinese have a heathenish custom, when they meet, for one to shake his own hands to his friends. That is not our custom. Let us be more classical; *Our dextra jungere dextra non datur*.

Let us follow the English and the Saxon custom, and shake hands with our friends. I give my hands to the friends next me. Let us embrace, *more majorum*, and have a good hearty shaking of hands. [Great cheering, while Mr. Webster shakes hands with those near, and his example is followed by the company.]

Gentlemen, all the world admits that identity of local origin is a tie of connection and sympathy, especially if it be strengthened by early association, by the meeting with one another in the school-house, and in the early society of life. In the morning of life, the heart opens all its sympathies to those around it, and receives impressions which are deep and lasting. We have migrated from one State to another. Our migration has not, indeed, been far. Nor have we come among strangers; nor have we had a new tongue to learn, new principles to imbibe, new affairs of life to pursue; but, nevertheless, we have changed our allegiance; we have changed our citizenship; we have changed our social relations. New Hampshire men once in all these respects, we have ceased to be New Hampshire men now in every thing, but grateful remembrance and affections for the past.

To-day we meet to resume, for the time, the feelings which belong to us, as citizens of New Hampshire; to put on the New Hampshire character, and see how well it may fit us here, in the metropolis of the State, to which we have come. Gentlemen, our lot is propitious; singularly, remarkably, propitious. We are the native sons of one State, we are the adopted children of another, and we are proud of both. [Warm applause.] We desire not to forget whence we came, and Heaven forbid that we should forget where we are. We have met, I say, to commemorate our native State. We value it according to its merits, which we believe high and honorable. We value it for what Nature has conferred upon it, and for what its hardy sons have done for themselves. We believe, and we know, that its scenery is beautiful; that its skies are all healthful; that its mountains and lakes are surpassingly grand and sublime.

If there be any thing on this continent, the work of Nature, in hills, and lakes, and seas, and woods, and forests, strongly attracting the admiration of all those who love natural scenery, it is to be found in our mountain State of New Hampshire.

It happened to me latterly to visit the northern parts of the State. It was Autumn. The trees of the forests, by the discoloration of the leaves, had presented one of the most beautiful spectacles that the human eye can rest upon. But the low and deep murmur of those forests; the fogs, and mists, rising and spreading and clasping the breasts of the mountains, whose heads were still high and bright in the skies, all these indicated that a wintry storm was on the wing; that the spirit of the mountains was stirred, and that ere long the voice of tempests would speak. But even this was exciting; exciting to those of us who had been witnesses before of such stern forebodings, and exciting in itself as an exhibition of the grandeur of natural scenery. For my part, I felt the truth of that sentiment, applied elsewhere and on another occasion, that

“The loud torrent and the whirlwind’s roar,
But bound me to my native mountains more.”

[Applause.]

Ours is not one of the richest of the States. It does not compare with Massachusetts in its facilities of mercantile or commercial occupation and enterprise. Its soil is sterile and stubborn, but the resolution to subdue it is stubborn also. Unrelenting rocks have yielded, and do yield, to unrelenting labor; and there are productiveness, and health, and plenty, and comfort, over all her hills and among all her valleys. Manly strength, the nerved arm of freemen, each one tilling his own land, and standing on his own soil, enjoying what he earns, and ready to defend it; these have made all comfortable and happy.

Nor need we be ashamed of her literary, her religious, or her social institutions. I have seen, and others of my age have seen, the church and the school-house rise in the very centre of the forest, and stand and be visited in the midst of winter snows. And where these things lie at the foundation and commencement of society, where the worship of God, the observance of morals, and the culture of the human mind, are springs of action with those who take hold of the original forest, to subdue it by strong arms and strong muscles, depend upon it, no such people ever fail. [Sensation.]

Everywhere, *everywhere*, on her hills and rivers, are the school-houses. The school-house : who shall speak of that all over New England as it ought to be spoken of? Who shall speak, as they ought to be spoken of, of the wisdom, and foresight, and benevolence, and sagacity of our forefathers, in establishing, as a great public police for the benefit of the whole, as a business in which all are interested, the great system of public instruction? The world had previously seen nothing like it. But the world, in some parts, has since copied from it. But where, when you talk of fostering Governments, of guardian Governments, of Governments which render to subjects that protection which the allegiance of subjects demands; where is it, I ask, that, as here with us, it has come to be a great and fundamental proposition, existing before constitutions, that it is the duty, the bounden duty, of Governments composed by the representation of all, to lay the foundation of the happiness and respectability of society, in universal education? If you can tell me such a country out of New England, I would be glad to hear of it. I know of none. I have read of none. [Applause.]

Gentlemen, the inhabitants of our New Hampshire mountains were, it must be confessed, from the first, rather inclined to the indulgence of a military spirit. I believe that that is common to mountainous regions in most parts of the world. Scotland and Switzerland show the example of hardy, strong men in mountainous regions, attached to war and to the chase : and it is not unfortunate in our New Hampshire history, that this sentiment, to a considerable degree, prevailed. For the position of the country, and the state of the people called for its exercise. We know that New Hampshire was settled in all its frontier towns, under circumstances of the most dangerous and difficult nature and character. It was a border State. It bordered on the Indians and on the French; names and nations always coupled together in the language of our fathers as common enemies to them. This exposed the frontier men, of New Hampshire especially, to perpetual war; to perpetual danger at least of war, and its frequent occurrence. People forget: they forget how recent it is, that the interior, the border country of New Hampshire, was settled and reclaimed, and made safe from Indian depredation. All the world reads that New

England is the oldest part of the United States, or one of the oldest. It has been looked upon as the longest settled. But, in regard to the frontiers of our native State, the settlement has been recent. Even up to the time of the birth of some of us now living, there was some degree of danger from Indian depredations and Indian wars; liability to Indian assaults, murders, and burnings.

Whole generations, at least one entire generation, tilled the land and raised their bread with their arms in their hands, or in the fields with them at their labor. We do not now appreciate the difficulty of those frontier settlements; because subsequent prosperity and security have obliterated the recollection.

The pioneers of more fortunate countries in our day, what are their dangers compared with those of our fathers? They go to a mild climate. They go to a fertile land; and they have behind them a powerful Government, capable of defending them against the foe, of protecting their interests, and of redressing the wrongs they may suffer. It was not so with our fathers in New Hampshire. There, on the border were the Indians, and behind the Indians were the hostile French. It was in this situation of border danger and border warfare, and border strife and border suffering, that our ancestors laid the foundation of the State from which we come.

In the language of Fisher Ames, "It is not in Indian Wars that heroes are celebrated; but it is there they are formed. No enemy on earth is more formidable, in the skill of his ambushes, in the suddenness of his attack, or in the ferocity of his revenge." Not only was this foe to be encountered, but also a civilized State at enmity with us behind the Indians, supplying them with means, and always ready to purchase the victims that they could bring for sale to Canada; this was the condition of things in which the frontiers were settled. Let it be added, that half the year was winter, and that on the surface of the snow, encrusted by frosts, bands of savages, coming from a distance of two hundred miles, suddenly appeared and set fire, at midnight, to the houses and villages of the settlers.

It was in this discipline, it was in these Indian Wars, it was especially in the war of 1756, against the French, in which almost every man in New Hampshire, capable of bearing arms, bore arms;

it was here that the military spirit of the country, the bravery, the gallantry of these mountain inhabitants were all called forth. They were a people given to the chase and to the hunt in time of peace; fitted for endurance and danger, and when war came, they were ready to meet it. It was in the midst of these vicissitudes that they were formed to hardihood and enterprise, and trained to military skill and fearlessness.

As one example out of many, I might refer to Gen. John Stark, well known for his military achievements in all the wars of his time. A hunter in peace, a soldier in war; and as a soldier, always among the foremost and the bravest. [Applause.] And since he is brought to my remembrance, let me indulge in the recollection of him for a moment.

Gen. Stark was my neighbor; the neighbor and friend of my father. One in a highly important, the other in a less distinguished situation; they had seen military service together, and had met the enemy in the same field. It was in the decline of Stark's life, comparatively speaking, when the Revolutionary War broke out. He entered into it, however, with all the manliness and all the fervor of his youthful character. Yet, in his advanced age, like other old men, he turned back fondly to earlier scenes; and when he spoke of the "war," he always meant the old French and Indian war. His remembrances were of Canada; of the exploits at Crown Point, and Ticonderoga, and Lake George. He seemed to think of the Revolution as only a family quarrel, in which, nevertheless, he took a warm and decided part; but he preferred to talk of the "war" in which he was taken by the Indians, as he was more than once, I think, and carried to Canada. The last time I saw him, he was seated around a social fire with his neighbors. As I entered, he greeted me, as he always did, with affection; and I believe he complimented me on my complexion, which he said was like my father's; and his was such, he said, that he never knew whether he was covered with powder or not. [Laughter.] The conversation turned, like other conversations among country neighbors, upon this man's condition and that man's condition; the property of one, and the property of another, and how much each was worth. At last, rousing himself from an apparent slumber, he said, "Well, I never knew but once what I was worth. In the war, the Indians

took me, and carried me to Canada, and sold me to the French for forty pounds ; and, as they say a thing is worth what it will fetch, I suppose I was worth forty pounds.” [Laughter.]

These are the scenes, ye native born ; this is the history, ye sons of New Hampshire, of the times and the events, which brought forth the gallant spirits of our native State into the midst of a still more important and more serious conflict, which began here in 1776. New Hampshire was then full of soldiers ; indeed, I may say that the whole of New England was full of soldiers, when the Revolutionary War broke out. New Hampshire, especially, had hardly any body in it that had not used the custom of bearing arms in the previous war. As proof of the soldier-like character of our New England yeomanry, I may mention a fact which should not be forgotten ; that, of all the soldiers, regular and militia, which served in the war of Independence, Massachusetts and New Hampshire, Connecticut and Rhode Island, these four little States, which, as you look upon a map of the United States, you can cover with your hand, these States furnished more than one half of all the men that achieved our Independence. [Cheers.]

It appears from official and statistical record, that, during the war, in the regular service and in the militia service, three hundred and seventeen, or three hundred and twenty thousand men were employed in our armies. I say that, of these, New England alone furnished more than half.

I may refer to a period further back. I may revert to the time that Louisburg was taken from the French, in 1745. How many men do you think the States of New England maintained ? I believe, Gentlemen, they maintained, for one or two years at least, upon the pay of the Colonies, more men against the French, than were enlisted, at any one time, in our late war with England. And that induced old Lord Chatham to say in his place in the House of Lords, “I remember, my Lords, when New England raised four regiments on her own bottom, and took Louisburg from the veteran troops of France.”

Then came the war of the Revolution ; it broke out here in the State of Massachusetts. Where was New Hampshire then ? Was she alienated from the cause, or from her sister State ? No. Neither then, nor at any time in the succeeding contest, was her soil

subject to the tread of a hostile foot. Whether they thought it not worth entering, or whether they did not choose to encounter the dwellers in her mountains, I do not care to decide. The truth is, no enemy trod on the soil of New Hampshire. But when the strife began, when the beacon fires were lighted here, when the march from Boston to Lexington, and Concord, had spread the flames of Liberty, who answered to the call? Did New Hampshire need to be summoned to Bunker Hill? She came at the first blaze of the beacon fires. None were earlier, none more ready, none more valiant.

I think it is Madame de Stael who says, that "from the mountains of the North there comes nothing but fire and the sword." And on this occasion, there did indeed come from our native mountains both fire and the sword; not the fire of devastation and desolation, not the sword of ruthless plunder and massacre; but the fire of LIBERTY and the sword of PATRIOTISM. [Overpowering applause.] And how ardently the one burned, and how vigorously the other was plied till the return of peace enabled the country to sheath it, and be at rest, let the whole history of that country tell. [Cheers redoubled.]

Gentlemen, from Bunker Hill to Yorktown, there was not a battle in which New Hampshire blood was not shed. I may go further yet; and I may say that there is, probably, of the many hundreds now in this very Hall, a representative of some New Hampshire officer or soldier who fell in every field, and left his bones where he fought his battle. The blood, *the blood* of New Hampshire men, falling everywhere, and in every year of the war, in defence of the liberty of the country, is here to-night. I hope it is worthy of its descent, and that it will transmit itself undefiled to ages, and ages yet to come. [Applause.]

Those who returned to New Hampshire from that seven years' contest, have their graves on her mountain sides, and along the valleys of their native land; and those graves are ever objects of public regard, and private affection:

"How sleep the brave, who sink to rest,
By all their Country's wishes blest!"

* * * * *

"And Freedom shall awhile repair,
And dwell, a weeping hermit, there."

They are ever pointed out to the passing traveller as the last resting place of the patriotic and the brave ; and they continue to be watered with the tears of a grateful posterity. But, alas ! all did not return. McCleary, the earliest, or one of the earliest of the New Hampshire victims of the Revolutionary struggle, fell in Charlestown. His blood is mixed with the earth, upon which yonder monument stands, raising its head to the skies, and challenging, from the world, respect and admiration for the spot where a military achievement was performed, which, in its results, in the long career of its consequences, in the great course of events which followed it, and their effects upon human happiness, or human liberty, has no parallel in the history of mankind.

Adams and Coleman fell at Saratoga, and the soil of New York contains their ashes. Col. Scammell, a scholar, a gentleman of high attainment and accomplishment, a soldier of undaunted valor, went through the whole career of the war, and lost his life at its close, when making a *reconnoissance*, as Adjutant General, before the redoubts at Yorktown. There he fell. He lies buried in the grave-yard at Williamsburg. An affectionate friend and comrade, Gen. Henry Dearborn, took pains to search out the spot where his remains were buried. He could find no more, than that they lay somewhere in that consecrated burial-ground. A braver, or a better man, did not belong to the army. I never read his history without being much affected. He left no descendants. He was never married. His career was short and brilliant, like that of the star that shoots across the horizon, and goes out to be seen no more. His friends came home from the army, full of attachment and love for his name and fame. Gen. John Brooks, formerly Governor of this State, beloved by every body and distinguished for every virtue, named a son for him, Alexander Scammell Brooks. This son was brought up to the army like his predecessor and namesake, and lost his life in the Florida war. Gen. Dearborn, another friend, also named a son for him, Gen. Henry Alexander Scammell Dearborn, whom we have the pleasure of seeing here to-night. Col. Wadsworth also gave his name to a son who entered the Navy, and is now Commodore Alexander Scammell Wadsworth.

The three namesakes, all about the same age, and early acquaintances and friends, lived, until death, in the time of the Florida War,

broke up the trio and reduced the number to Gen. Dearborn and Commodore Wadsworth. I wish, as a spontaneous tribute of the present generation, somewhere within the sacred grounds of the churchyard at Williamsburg, at the expense of us, Sons of New Hampshire, a monument should be raised to the memory of that distinguished soldier.

Gentlemen, I have no right to occupy much of your time. My voice is a little too familiar to you all. There are others to whom you will listen with more gratification. I will only refer, in a very few words, to the civil history of this, our native State, in the past and important era of our history; and in doing that, I will mention only the great men who signed the Declaration of Independence, and those who put their names to the Constitution of the United States. The Declaration of Independence, on the part of New Hampshire, was signed, in the first place, by Josiah Bartlett. He was an unostentatious man, but able, sensible, and patriotic. He left numerous descendants, and there are here those who belong to his family and kindred.

Gen. William Whipple was another who signed the Declaration. He left no descendants; nothing but his character, his name, and his fame.

Dr. Matthew Thornton was a third. And his descendants are in New Hampshire, in Boston, and elsewhere in the country; some of them now in this Hall. Dr. Thornton was one of the most ardent sons of liberty, but was, as it happened, not at Philadelphia on the 4th of July, 1776, when the vote was passed. He hurried immediately to Philadelphia. You know that the official resolutions of Independence were only to be signed by the President. But a Declaration, for individual signatures, was drawn up. The first of the members who signed, after the President, was Josiah Bartlett, of New Hampshire; the next, was William Whipple, of New Hampshire. Matthew Thornton did not sign immediately, because he was not there. Others went on to sign; and the Massachusetts members, you remember, signed next to the two members from New Hampshire. Thornton hastened back to his post to sign with the rest, and the nearest place to his colleagues he could find, was at the bottom of the right-hand column; and there it stands, "Matthew Thornton." [Applause.]

Well, Gentlemen, we now come to the Constitution of the United States. John Langdon and Nicholas Gilman represented New Hampshire in the Convention of 1789. Mr. Langdon has left descendants behind him, honorable and worthy. An excellent woman, a daughter, still lives, esteemed and regarded by all who know her.

Nicholas Gilman, of a family always an honor to his native State, and some of whom I dare say are here to-night, left no children.

At this period of time, without disturbing individual opinion or party feelings, I may speak of some of the early members of Congress. When the Constitution first went into operation, the members from New Hampshire assisted in forming the original organic laws, were confided in by the first President of the United States, and did all that they could do to put the machine in operation. At the head of this list was Samuel Livermore, the father of several gentlemen of respectability in public life, in the State, and in the National Councils. Jeremiah Smith and William Gordon, also, both men of talent and industry, and warm friends of the first President, held seats in Congress with high reputation.

This, Gentlemen, was the history, the early history of our State, as one of the Union, so far as we may summarily comment upon it here to-night.

In regard to the military character of the Revolutionary heroes, and the early statesmen, and in regard to everything which was done, or ought to have been done, or was expected to be done, to bring New Hampshire honorably and respectably into the great circle of our Union, Gentlemen, I leave all this for abler tongues, fresher recollections, and more persuasive accents. I sit down myself, filled with profound veneration for the character of my native State, and acknowledging to her my own personal debt, for her culture and nurture, and determined, so far as in me lies, to transmit the sense of that obligation to those who shall come after me.

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER'S SECOND SPEECH.

THE regular toasts have now been gone through. I have occupied this Chair as long as it seems to be convenient, and, with a few parting words, I propose to resign it to another.

Gentlemen, departing from the character of particular States, leaving, for the present and at last, the agreeable thoughts that have entertained us, of our own homes and our own origin, it appears to me, before we part, that it is not improper that we should call to our attention the marked character of the age in which we live, and the great part that, in the dispensations of divine Providence, we are called upon to act in it.

To act our part well, as American citizens, as members of this great Republic, we must understand that part, and the duties which it devolves upon us. We cannot expect to blunder into propriety, or into greatness of action. We must learn the character of the age in which we live, we must learn our own place as a great and leading nation in that age, we must learn to appreciate justly our own position and character, as belonging to a government of a particular form, and we must act, in every case, and upon all subjects, as becomes our relations.

Now, Gentlemen, I venture to say, here and everywhere, in the face of the world, that there is not on earth any country, at the present moment, so interesting as the United States. I do not say, no country so strong, so rich, so beautiful, so high or commanding; but I say no country so *interesting*, no country that sets such an example before the world of self-government, no country around which so many hopes and so many fears cluster, no country, in regard to which the world, with so much earnestness inquires, "what will she come to?"

I need not say that we are at the head of this continent. Who denies that? Who doubts it? Here are twenty millions of people, free, commercial, and enterprising, beyond example. They are spread over an immense territory, and that territory has been lately increased, by a vast and an extraordinary addition. The country stretches from sea to sea, across the whole breadth of North America, and from the tropics to the great Lakes and Rivers of the North.

Forty or fifty years ago, a Boston poet said to his countrymen,

"No pent up Utica contracts our powers,
For the whole boundless continent is ours."

This was poetic; but the poetry has been advancing, and is still advancing, more and more, to sober truth and reality.

But that is not all. Nor is it the most important point. We are brought by steam, and the improvements attendant upon its discovery, into the immediate neighborhood of the great powers of Europe, living under different forms of government; forms in which the aristocratic, or the despotic, or the monarchical prevails. And the United States, the second commercial country in the world, whose intercourse affects every other country, come into the circle, and are become the immediate neighbors of them all. And what is expected to be the consequence of this contiguity, this proximity, this bringing the Republican practice into the immediate presence of despotism, monarchy, and aristocracy? This is the philosophical view, which attracts the attention of the observant part of mankind, most strongly, and strikes us with the greatest power. What is to be the result?

Gentlemen, between us and all the Governments of Europe, political power is yet separate. They have their systems, and we have ours: but, then, their and our joint interests approach, and sometimes amalgamate. The commercial interests are mingling together all over the civilized world. The information of mankind is becoming common to all nations, and the general tone of sentiment common, in learned circles, and among the masses of intelligent men. In matters of science, taste, commerce, in questions of right and justice, and matters of judicial administration, we think very much alike. But, in regard to the origin of Government, the form of

Government, and, in some cases, the end and objects of Government, we differ. And yet, it is certain that of all human institutions, Government is the chief, and by far the most important ; and as the Press, at least to a very great extent, in modern times, is free, Government, its origin, its forms, its duties, its ends and objects, and its practical administration, are everywhere a constant subject of discussion. Now that steam has created such a daily intercourse, and brought countries so much nearer together, men of one nation seem to talk to those of another, on political subjects, as on other subjects, almost like inhabitants of the same city, or the same county. This is a condition of things, novel and interesting, and worthy of our reflection. In National relations, we sustain a rank, we hold a certain place, and we have high duties to perform. Of course it is our duty to abstain from all interference in the political affairs of other nations. But, then, there is one thing, which we are bound to do. We are bound to show to the whole world, in the midst of which we are placed, that a regular, steady, conservative Government, founded on broad, popular, representative systems, is a practicable thing. We are bound to show, that there may be such a Government, not merely for a small, but for a great country, in which life and property shall be secure, religion and the worship of the Deity observed, good morals cultivated, commerce and the arts encouraged, and the general prosperity, of all classes, maintained and advanced.

It strikes me, and I repeat the sentiment only to show the strength of my own conviction, that our great destiny on earth is, to exhibit the practicability of good, safe, secure, popular Governments ; to prove, and I hope we do prove, that there may be security for property, and for personal rights ; that there may be the maintenance of religion and morals, that there may be an extensive diffusion of knowledge, a carrying on of all branches of education to their highest pitch, by means of institutions founded on Republican principles. The prophesies and the poets are with us. Everybody knows Bishop Berkely's lines, written a hundred years ago :

“ There shall be seen another golden age,
 The rise of Empires and of Arts ;
 The good and great inspiring epic rage,
 The wisest heads and noblest hearts.”

-- Westward the course of Empire takes its way ;
 The four first acts already past ;
 A fifth shall close the drama with the day,
 Time's noblest offspring is the last."

And, at a more recent period, but, still, when there was nothing to be seen in this vast North American Continent but a few colonial settlements, another English poet suggests, to his country, that she shall see a great nation, her own offspring, springing up, with wealth, and power, and glory, in the New World ;

" In other lands, another Britain see ;
 And what thou art, America shall be."

But, in regard to this country, there is no poetry like the poetry of events ; and all the prophecies lag behind their fulfilment.

That is the doctrine, which you, and I, of America, are bound to teach. [Cheers.] Does anybody doubt that, on this broad, popular platform, there exists now, in these United States, a safe government ? Tell me where there is one safer. Or, tell me many on the face of the old world on which public faith is more confidently reposed. I say the government of the United States is one of the safest. I do not know how long it may be before it will become one of the oldest governments in the world. [Loud Applause.]

We are in an age of progress. That progress is towards self-government by the enlightened portion of the community, every where. And a great question is, how this impulse can be carried on, without running to excess ; how popular government can be established, without falling into licentiousness. That is the great question, and we have seen how difficult it is, by those not taught in the school of experience, to establish such a system.

It is a common sentiment uttered by those who would revolutionize Europe, that to be free, men have only to *will* it. That is a fallacy. There must be prudence and a balancing of departments, and there must be persons who will teach the science of free, popular governments ; and there are but few, except in this country, who can teach that science. ["Hear, hear."] And we have arrived at this ability by an experience of two hundred years. And how has it come ? Why, we are an off-shoot of the British Constitution. In that Constitution there is a popular element, that

is, a representation of the people. This element is there mixed up with the monarchical and the aristocratic elements. But our ancestors brought with them no aristocracy, and no monarchical rule, except a general submission and allegiance to the Crown of England. Their immediate government was altogether a popular representation ; and the country has been thoroughly trained, and schooled, in the practice of such a government.

To abide by the voice of the representatives fairly chosen, by the edicts of those who make the legislative enactments, has been, and is, our only system. And from the first settlement of the Colony, at Plymouth, through all our subsequent history, we have adhered to this principle. We threw off the power of the King, and we never had admitted the power of the Parliament. That was John Adams' doctrine. And that is the reason why the Parliament was not alluded to in the Declaration of Independence. The Colonies acknowledged the power of the Crown, but never having acknowledged the authority of the Parliament, they disdained to give any reason for throwing it off.

When the Revolution severed us from the mother country, then we had nothing to do but to go on with our elections, supplying the Governors, not longer appointed by the Crown, by our own election, thus making the whole government popular, and to proceed as at first ; and that it was which enabled the Colonies of Connecticut and Rhode Island, down to a very late period, to continue their ancient Constitutions.

If you look anywhere, beside at France, on the continent of Europe, can you find any thing that bears the aspect of a Representative Government ? There is nothing.

It is very difficult to establish a free conservative Government for the equal advancement of all the interests of society. What has Germany done ; learned Germany, fuller of ancient lore than all the world beside ? What has Italy done, what have they done who dwell on the spot where Cicero and Justinian lived ? They have not the power of self-government which a common town-meeting, with us, possesses. [Applause.]

Yes, I say, that those persons who have gone from our town-meetings, to dig gold in California, are more fit to make a Republican Government than any body of men in Germany or Italy, because

they have learned this one great lesson; that there is no security without law, and that, under the circumstances in which they are placed, where there is no military authority to cut their throats, there is no sovereign will but the will of the majority; that, therefore, if they remain, they must submit to that will.

It is the prevalence of this general sentiment of obedience to law, that they must have representatives, and, that if they be fairly chosen, their edicts must stand for law; it is the general diffusion of this opinion that enables our people everywhere to govern themselves. And, where they have our habits, you will find that they will establish government upon the foundation of a free, popular constitution, and nothing else.

Now, I think, gentlemen, that while we prescribe no forms, while we dictate to nobody, our mission is to show that a constitutional, representative, conservative government, founded on the freest possible principles, can do, *can do*, for the advancement of general morals and the general prosperity, as much as any other government can do. This is our business; this our mission among the nations; and it is a nobler destiny, even, than that which Virgil assigns to imperial Rome.

“Excedent alii spirantia mollius aera,
Credo equidem; vivos ducunt de marmore vultus;
Orabunt causas melius; cœlique meatus
Describent radio, et surgentia sidera dicent,
Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento:
Hæc tibi erunt artes, pacisque imponere morem,
Parecere subjectis, et debellare superbos.”

Gentlemen, two things are to be maintained and insisted on. One, that men in an enlightened age are capable of self-government: that the enjoyment of equal rights is a practicable thing, and that freedom is not a dangerous thing for a body politic. And the other is, that freedom from restraint is not FREEDOM; that licentiousness, the discharge from moral duties, and that general scramble which leads the idle and the extravagant to hope for a time when they may put their hands into their neighbors' pockets, call it what you please, is tyranny. It is no matter whether the Emperor of Turkey robs his subject of his property, or, whether, under the notion of equal rights, the property earned by one shall be

taken from him by a majority. I would not choose the latter. On the contrary, give me Turkey, for I would prefer one despot to ten thousand. Who would labor if there were not a security that what he earned would be his own, for his own enjoyment, for the education of his children, for the support of his age, and the gratification of all his reasonable desires?

Gentlemen, the events of the past year are many, and some of them most interesting. They seem to result from an indefinite purpose of those who wish to meliorate the condition of things in Europe. They had no distinct ideas. There may be incidental benefits arising from the scenes of turmoil and of blood; but no general and settled change. These wars may somewhat assuage the imperial sway of despots. They may serve to convince those who hold despotic power, that they may shake their own thrones if they do not yield something to popular demands. In that sense some good may come of these events.

Then, Gentlemen, there is another aspect. We have all had our sympathies much enlisted in the Hungarian effort for liberty. We have all wept at its failure. We thought we saw a more rational hope of establishing independence in Hungary than in any other part of Europe, where the question has been in agitation within the last twelve months. But despotic power from abroad intervened to suppress that hope.

And, Gentlemen, what will come of it I do not know. For my part, at this moment, I feel more indignant at recent events connected with Hungary than at all those which passed in her struggle for liberty. [Tremendous cheering.] I see that the Emperor of Russia demands of Turkey that the noble Kossuth and his companions shall be given up, to be dealt with at his pleasure. ["Shame!" "shame!"] And I see that this demand is made in derision of the established law of nations. Gentlemen, there is something on earth greater than arbitrary or despotic power. The lightning has its power, and the whirlwind has its power, and the earthquake has its power; but there is something among men more capable of shaking despotic thrones than lightning, whirlwind, or earthquake, [overpowering outburst of applause] that is, the excited and aroused indignation of the whole civilized world. [Renewed cheers.] Gentlemen, the Emperor of Russia holds himself to be

bound by the law of nations, from the fact that he negotiates with civilized nations, and that he forms alliances and treaties. He professes, in fact, to live in a civilized age, and to govern an enlightened nation. I say that if, under these circumstances, he shall perpetrate so great a violation of national law, as to seize these Hungarians and to execute them, he will stand as a criminal and malefactor in the view of the public law of the world. [Loud huzzas continued for several minutes.] The whole world will be the tribunal to try him, and he must appear before it, and hold up his hand, and plead, and abide its judgment. [Reiterated cheers.]

The Emperor of Russia is the supreme law-giver in his own country, and, for aught I know, the executor of that law also. But, thanks be to God, he is not the supreme law-giver or executor of the national law, and every offence against that, is an offence against the rights of the civilized world, ["hear, hear!!"] and if he breaks that law, in the case of Turkey, or any other case, the whole world has a right to call him out, and to demand his punishment. ["True! true!!"]

Our rights, as a nation, like those of other nations, are held under the sanction of national law; a law which becomes more important from day to day; a law which none who profess to agree to it, are at liberty to violate. Nor let him imagine, nor let any one imagine, that mere force can subdue the general sentiment of mankind. It is much more likely to extend that sentiment, and to destroy the power which he most desires to establish and secure.

Gentlemen, the bones of poor John Wickliffe were dug out of his grave, seventy years after his death, and burnt for his heresy; and his ashes were thrown upon a river in Warwickshire. Some prophet of that day said:

"The Avon to the Severn runs,
The Severn to the sea,
And Wickliffe's dust shall spread abroad,
Wide as the waters be."

Gentlemen, if the blood of Kossuth is taken by an absolute, unqualified, unjustifiable violation of national law, what will it appease, what will it pacify? It will mingle with the earth, it will mix with the waters of the ocean, the whole civilized world will snuff it in

the air, and it will return with awful retribution on the heads of those violators of national law and universal justice. [Great enthusiasm.] I cannot say when, or in what form ; but depend upon it, that if such an act take place, then thrones, and principalities, and powers, must look out for the consequences. [Overpowering applause.]

And now, Gentlemen, let us do our part ; let us understand the position in which we stand, as the great republic of the world, at the most interesting era of the world. Let us consider the mission and the destiny which Providence seems to have designed for us, and let us so take care of our own conduct, that, with irreproachable hearts, and with hands void of offence, we may stand up whenever and wherever called upon, and with a voice not to be disregarded, say, this shall not be done, at least not without our protest. [Mr. Webster's speech was received with much more than the common exhibition of approbation, and, at its close, three times three cheers were called for and responded to heartily and unanimously. Mr. Webster then retired, the whole company standing while he left the Hall.]

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